

For senior citizens, a key benefit of the recently-passed health insurance legislation is more affordable coverage for prescription drugs.

With Medicare, America made a promise to our seniors: they could live out their golden years with some basic peace of mind and health care coverage they can count on.

The Affordable Care Act renews and strengthens that promise. Seniors who fall in the donut hole coverage gap in 2010 will receive a one-time \$250 rebate check. The first batch of one-time \$250 checks was mailed earlier this month—approximately three weeks ahead of schedule. These checks will continue to be mailed monthly throughout the year as Medicare beneficiaries enter the coverage gap.

This payment is tax free.

Beginning in 2011, the bill provides a 50% discount on prescription drugs in the donut hole; by 2020, the donut hole will be completely closed.

Under the new health care legislation, the guaranteed Medicare benefits that seniors have earned will not change, regardless of whether they receive them through Medicare or Medicare Advantage. Eligibility will not change, either. Medicare will continue to cover costs the way it always has, but it will be on a stronger financial footing moving forward. And the number of primary care physicians will increase so that seniors can get the care they need.

If you have any questions about the health care legislation, please call my office.